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## NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS



IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

VACCINE THERAPY OF PERTUSSIS.—*The Medical Record* states in an editorial that whooping-cough takes first rank among the acute infections as a cause of death in children. In 1906 Bordet and Gengon isolated a bacillus from the deeper and more remote parts of the respiratory tract. This discovery led investigators to seek a specific therapeutic agent for pertussis. The bacillus was isolated by cultivating cultures from the throats of children suffering from the disease. The vaccine obtained was injected into patients afflicted with it. Bamberger concludes that the treatment seemed to lessen the severity and abort complications rather than to shorten the duration of the disease. The problem of cure is attracting attention and may find speedy solution.

WHOLESOME NEGLECT.—*The American Journal of Surgery* says the healing of a mastoid wound is often accelerated by lengthening the intervals between dressings, allowing nature to do her part in repair with minimal disturbance. The same journal remarks that the essence of asepsis during operations consists in handling nothing, though sterilized, without a definite reason.

TREATMENT OF DISEASES OF VEGETABLE PARASITIC ORIGIN BY DEEP INJECTIONS OF MERCURY.—*The Medical Record* has an interesting paper on this subject by Barton Lisle Wright, M.D. He believes that for every vegetable organism mercury is the chemical affinity, and except in cases of renal insufficiency may be used for its cure. He reports cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, typhoid fever, epidemic catarrh, follicular tonsillitis, cystitis, chronic otitis media, furunculosis, croupous pneumonia, bronchopneumonia and gonorrhœal arthritis treated successfully by deep muscular injections of mercury.

THE RECTUM IN CONSTIPATION.—*The Maryland Medical Journal*, quoting from a contemporary, says that in constipation cathartics and laxatives are given with a view of stimulating the colon and small intestine, when the rectum may be the chief offender. When it has become insensitive from overloading, or constricted from the healing of piles or fissures, dilatation is recommended. It may be done instrumentally under an anæsthetic in severe cases, or by digital dilatation,

followed by daily self-treatment with a set of dilators made of glass or hard rubber.

**HISTORY OF A TYPHOID CARRIER.**—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* reports a case of a patient who carried typhoid bacilli for four years and infected 26 persons. After treatment with typhoid vaccine for two months he no longer discharged the bacilli for the three and a half months he was under observation following the last dose.

**THE BANANA.**—The same journal describes the banana as a fruit in a sterile package. In its green state it consists largely of starch, which by ripening, is converted into soluble carbohydrates. The rate of ripening is dependent on the temperature at which it is kept. The unbroken peel protects it, and the pulp of a sound banana is practically sterile. Its importance as a food is still under-estimated, because it is usually eaten when not fully ripe.

**GAUZE SPONGES IN ABDOMINAL OPERATIONS.**—Dr. J. Clarence Webster advises a modification of the use of strips of gauze, several yards in length, fastened in pockets attached to the laparotomy sheet, the largest of them being used to hold the intestines away from the area of operation. The others are for making a wall around the field of operation and sponging blood and other fluids. Dr. Webster advises that the long strip used in packing off should be wet with warm normal salt solution. In routine work the dry strips of gauze are fastened in the pockets of the sheet before it is folded and sterilized.

**REMOVING FACIAL HAIR IN WOMEN.**—*The Interstate Medical Journal*, quoting from a German contemporary, says a new method of removing superfluous hair is to rub the hairy area twice daily with a piece of pumice stone and then anoint it with some bland salve. The procedure must be kept up for weeks, but often results in the permanent removal of the hairiness.

**MOVING PICTURE ILLUSTRATIONS IN MEDICINE.**—T. H. Weisenburg in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* describes a new departure in the delineation of disease. The author has a photograph of a man with Jacksonian convulsions in which the fit starts in the right corner of the mouth and takes in successively the right side of the face, eyes and eyelids, then the muscles of the right hand, then the whole right arm. Ordinarily a convulsion of this type is so rapid that there is little opportunity to make extensive observations. In the demonstrations of these pictures on the screen the size of the subject is greatly enlarged and it is most interesting to watch the succession of muscular twitching and to show the movement of both eyes, and brow.

IMMUNIZATION AGAINST TYPHOID.—The Department of Health of New York City has been prepared since January 1 to make without charge preventive inoculations to immunize against typhoid. On the occurrence of a case of typhoid, free immunization is offered to every member of the family of the patient and to those who have been in contact with him. It is hoped that this will reduce the occurrence of the disease in the city.

AUTOTYPHOID INOCULATION AMONGST NURSES.—Dr. John W. Brannan, of New York, reports in the *Medical Record* the inoculation of some 200 hospital nurses and also about 50 members of the house staffs against typhoid. There were a few severe reactions, more marked among the men than among the women. Not more than three nurses asked to be relieved from duty for a day, whereas several of the internes were laid up for as much as two days at a time with temperatures ranging as high as 102°, rapid pulse, nausea, vomiting, severe headache, and pain in the back. These inoculations were begun in June. Early in November a pupil nurse contracted typhoid in Bellevue Hospital. She was one of seven who had refused inoculation. Of 83 who had accepted the typhoid prophylactic but one acquired the disease, though they were all more or less exposed to infection.

DANGER IN FORMALDEHYDE.—In a paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Dr. William E. Morgan warns against the careless use of formaldehyde. It is used in denaturing alcohol, which when applied as a disinfectant to the hands produces in some cases a severe dermatitis. Formic acid, or one of its compounds, is the basis of the venom in the sting of the ant, spider, wasp, or hornet. In susceptible persons the mere presence of the vapor in the room, or bedding of a patient, causes a stinging formication over the whole body. If used for fumigation the room and its contents should be thoroughly aired for 48 hours before being used again. Nurses should be particularly careful not to let it come in contact with the skin, especially when freshly washed and scrubbed. Sensitive persons should avoid formaldehyde. If affected, the hands or parts affected should be washed not more than once a day with lukewarm water and a vegetable oil soap, as castile. Avoid green soaps made with fish oil, or any animal oil soap. At other times use olive oil or cottonseed oil for cleansing; 10 minims of carbolic acid to the ounce keeps it from becoming rancid and makes it more soothing. Apply an ointment of zinc oxide 1 part, starch 2 parts, and petroleum 8 parts. Avoid all powders except sterilized starch, used during the vesicular stage only. Avoid rubber gloves. Wear a cotton protecting glove and sleeve until thoroughly healed.